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ABSTRACT

This paper presents findings of one in a series of four case studies that examined leadership in schools committed to reform. Sullivan High School is an innovative, innercity Chicago (Illinois) high school dedicated to creating a learning environment based on critical thinking and intellectual experiences. The role of the principal as an instructional leader and the school's involvement with the Paideia instructional program are given special attention. The school's membership in the Alliance for Essential Schools is also described. The organizational structure of the school is examined as well as changes that have been made since the school's dedication to reform began. Case study methodology included onsite observation, interviews, and informal discussions. Findings indicate that the Paideia was a successful model for teacher inservice training. However, implementation of the Alliance program met with teacher reluctance to participate in restructuring. Barriers to Alliance program success included the time-consuming and ambiguous nature of the program, lack of teacher training in shared decision making, and an increased pupil/teacher ratio. Sullivan's overall success, however, was due to the competence, attitude, and diligence of the staff. (Contains 12 references.) (LMI)

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**Roger L. Sullivan High School
Success by Exhibition**

**The National Center
for
School Leadership**

Project Report

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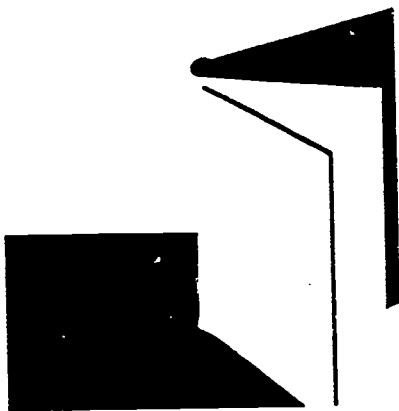
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*Roger L. Sullivan High School
Success by Exhibition*

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Roger L. Sullivan High School Success by Exhibition

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Cases in Distributed Leadership

A General Introduction to the Study

In order to broaden our understanding of leadership in schools committed to reform, we selected four buildings which were committed to one of three types of educational reform: the network of Accelerated Schools (Levin & Hopfenberg, 1991), the National Association of Middle Schools (Quattrone, 1990), or the Coalition of Essential Schools (Sizer, 1988). Each of these reforms respects the contextual differences across districts; each of these reforms espouses a set of principles which are central to their thinking about reform; and each of these reforms values collaboration among teachers and administrators. We chose four schools in three states to collect information which could better inform us about the role of leadership in schools striving to make changes.

Researchers developed a case study report for each site after reviewing background reports; interviewing faculty, administrators (in some cases), students and parents; and observing meetings and classes. The case studies and the cross case analysis will enable the reader to

- 1) Examine and evaluate the warrant that each of the cases deserve the label "having made progress" toward their commitment to reform.
- 2) Explore the nature of leadership, including the process of distributing leadership, among the school participants.
- 3) Speculate upon the interaction between leadership, the schools' commitment to change, and the schools' culture.

The case study methodology allowed us to observe the schools' social structures and leadership structures within the context of one year in the life of the change effort. A variety of rich resources are available to the researcher who spends extended time at a research site thus, "permitting a holistic study of complex social networks and complexes of social action and social meanings" (Feagin, Orum, and Sjoberg, 1991). Additionally, the time spent in the schools allowed for an historical overview of the change processes. Looking at the schools across cases offered the opportunity to look for common themes, theoretical underpinnings, and beliefs and decisions that guided the schools through their evolutions.

During Summer and Fall 1991, the NCSL research team met to establish criteria for site selection and systemize procedures for contact with each potential site. The selection criteria included four elements: a) the school must be publicly committed to a set of guiding principles for reform; b) the school must have local and, if possible, a state or nation wide reputation for having made progress toward putting these principles into practice; c) the school must be located near enough to a site researcher's home to permit regular visits to the school; and d) the school must agree to serve as a site. NCSL staff informally contacted school staff to determine possible interest in participating in the study while, at the same time, making inquiries into schools' reputations for making progress in their individual reform efforts. Schools were aware that they would be identified by name, but all staff members would be identified by pseudonym.

The NCSL staff ultimately chose four schools that met all of the selection criteria: Hollibrook Elementary School in Spring Branch, Texas; Dr. Charles E. Gavin Elementary School in Chicago Heights, Illinois; Cross Keys Middle School in Florissant, Missouri; and Roger L. Sullivan High School in Chicago, Illinois. Following the informal contact, the school principals were asked if they would like to be a site for a study of school leadership, defined broadly to include both teachers and administrators. In three of the schools, Hollibrook, Cross Keys, and Gavin, the principals agreed to participate after members of the school staff consented to become sites early in Fall 1991. At Sullivan the process took longer, in part because of a threatened teacher strike in the Chicago area. The principal initially agreed that an NCSL staff member could visit the school, but official permission to become a part of the study was not granted until early in 1992, once the school staff began to feel comfortable with the researcher's presence.

Data collection began in September 1991. During Fall 1991 site researchers visited the schools, observed meetings, sat in on classes, and talked informally with administrators and teachers. Data collection during Spring 1991 focused on semi-structured interviews with the school faculty, staff, and administration, and (in some cases) district administrators, parents, and students. Informal observations and discussions continued throughout the year.

The interviews were designed to accomplish two objectives: a) to gather information on participants' perceptions of change at their school, including their own roles in the change process; and b) to identify people perceived to be school leaders, whether their leadership had anything to do with the change process or not. The informal observations and discussions served as points of triangulation (Lincoln and Guba, 1985) for information obtained in the interviews, and also provided insight into the current status of reform in each school.

The resulting data were analyzed independently by each site researcher and also by two NCSL research assistants. As data became available the NCSL staff coded fieldnotes and interview transcripts into seven categories. In monthly research team meetings, the site researchers and the NCSL staff discussed both the categorization of fieldnotes and the themes that might be inferred from the data. These discussions enabled all researchers to review and reformulate a collective understanding of themes relating to school leadership and school change.

Once all data were collected (April 1992), each site researcher wrote an individual, narrative summary of his or her school case. The entire research team met three times to share internal drafts of the case studies. Each draft was read, questioned, and debated by all team members. To prepare the cross case analysis, two NCSL research assistants reviewed the entire corpus of fieldnotes and interviews. Data for each school were categorized according to statements related to mission, change, decision making, administrators, teachers, instruction, psychological environment, district relations, and community/family relations. These data were then summarized in paragraph form for each school, followed by a discussion of trends across schools as they related to each of the nine categories. The NCSL staff then condensed the categories into the three areas discussed above: a) the warrant for progress; b) the nature of leadership; and c) the interactions among leadership and school culture. The third drafts were shared with two external consultants, as was the second draft of the cross case analysis. Following these external reviews, the cases and the cross case analysis were revised for distribution as technical reports.

Abstract

This report examines the activity within an innovative, inner-city high school dedicated to create a learning environment based upon critical thinking and intellectual experiences. The role of principal as instructional leader is given special attention as well as the school's unique involvement with an instructional program (Piadeia). Grant also focuses on the school's membership in the Alliance for Essential Schools. The organizational structure of the school is described as well as changes that have been made since the school's dedication to reform began.

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PROLOGUE

May 22. Slouched in a student desk on the second floor of Roger C. Sullivan High School, it is easy to forget the task at hand. Sunshine lends its welcome presence to the afternoon—one of those infrequent but glorious late spring days we are privileged to enjoy near Lake Michigan. As soft, tender breezes, fragrant with the freshness of budding flowers, waft in through the open windows, I sink deeper into my reverie. Nothing this good, however, can last forever. The harsh sounds of squealing car tires and revving engines, punctuated by the stench of automobile exhaust, all too quickly bring an end to my solitary musings. I turn my attention to what is about to happen in the classroom.

I sit upright, as a student accurately observes that the chalkboards look like they have not been cleaned in a month. A small piece of plaster falls from the ceiling. Eleven seniors file into the room. Each takes the seat with his or her name tag on it in the circle of chairs arranged in the center of the room. Two observers sit, as do the two faculty members who will lead the seminar. A third teacher, who has been assigned to observe and grade the students, seats himself near the circle and just behind it.

These eleven seniors are about to engage in a 90-minute Socratic dialogue with their teachers as part of the "Diploma by Exhibition," which is required of all Sullivan students for graduation. The Exhibition consists of two parts: a) performance in the seminar, as judged by the faculty members on the basis of written criteria; and b) a three to five page essay on the topics of the seminar.

Students have had three weeks to prepare for the three assigned readings they will discuss: **The Declaration of Independence**; **Beyond Good and Evil**, an essay by Friedrich Nietzsche; and **A Marvelous Afternoon**, a short story by Gabriel Garcia Marquez.

In this seminar portion of the Diploma by Exhibition, the seniors will be graded on the quality of their contributions, their ability to express ideas and defend them, their facility in citing passages from the text to support their argumentation, and their general level of involvement.

This seminar is the culmination of four years of training in such discourse and interaction through the Socratic Seminar. The seminar is a pedagogical cornerstone of the Paideia Program, the instructional methodology for which Sullivan High School has achieved a measure of renown. I glance up as another fragment of plaster floats down. Waiting for the seminar to begin, I cannot help but reflect on what has been a unique year, one that will never leave me quite the same.

The Diploma by Exhibition seminar begins. The first teacher asks a question about one of the characters in *A Marvelous Afternoon* and asks that, for reference, the students write a response to the question on a piece of scratch paper. Five silent but busy minutes later the teacher asks the question again. The dialogue begins.

In rapid order and in turn, five students respond. The second teacher, seated across the circle from his colleague, cautions the students, "You're going to run into trouble if we're not somewhat critical of the material we're discussing." The pace quickens. Following an observation by a student, the second teacher says, "I'm confused. How did you get that impression?" The student cites a passage from the text to support her argument. Another student supports her. Two others join in the dialogue.

This pattern of active, probing discussion continues for approximately an hour. Students take issue with one another and with their instructors, citing passages from the readings to support their contentions as well as to support the arguments of their colleagues.

By now some of the apprehension that may have affected the early discussion, making it seem tentative and perhaps even sterile at times, is gone as seniors warm to their task. All have participated at least twice; two have spoken more than a dozen times.

Over an hour into the seminar, the temperature of the dialogue rises when the second teacher, referring to Nietzsche's essay on slave and master mentalities, asks what kind of people put the Declaration of Independence together.

A student responds. The first teacher asks this student to clarify her comment contending that the authors of the Declaration of Independence have a "slave mentality." The student says, "It didn't turn out for everyone . . . I don't know how to explain it but everyone wasn't equal." The student refers to a page in Nietzsche's essay—to which all seminar participants turn—and quotes it to support her statement. Another student agrees with her, explaining why she agrees. The second teacher comments, followed by three more students. The first of the three students then says, "Masters have what they want and they want to keep it." His observation is followed by comments from five students.

The second teacher asks the group if the people who framed the Declaration of Independence of the United States, many of whose ancestors came to this country poor, were the same type of people as European aristocracy. A student says, "No, they weren't." The second teacher asks a student to read from page 499 of Nietzsche. When the teacher stops him and asks the group to interpret what the author is saying, two other students respond. The first student asks the first teacher to explain a portion of the passage.

Discussion continues and when a student who has spoken several times begins to comment, the second teacher says that he would like to hear from someone else. Himself an African-American, the teacher asks a black student if African Americans are treated fairly in history texts. The student pauses and then says that he doesn't think they are. Several students and the first teacher comment. Nearly all of the students support their fellow seniors' opinions, citing passages from Nietzsche to buttress their arguments.

The bell sounds, signifying the end of the seminar. The students lean back in their chairs, relax and talk quietly while the teachers handle administrative matters and provide direction on completing the essays required as part of the "Diploma by Exhibition" graduation requirements.

Despite the fine reputation Sullivan enjoys, I had not expected the mature, reasoned argumentation and swift, sure insights of these students. I had read Mortimer Adler's *The Paideia Proposal* and several other works on the Paideia Program. But that was theory. This was real. I expected to find a significant

difference between the theory found in Adler's words and the reality of urban students engaging in Socratic discourse based on the classics. I found very little.

I have spent 21 years as the principal of a predominantly white, suburban high school that sent all but a handful of its high achieving, goal oriented students to college. This has had almost as profound an effect on my beliefs in education as did growing up in a small town in North Dakota.

Looking at the 11 students as they filed into the room—Asian, African-American, Hispanic and White, many of them from impoverished, single parent homes—I wondered how the educational world I had known would fit their needs—or if it would meet their needs at all. As a novice researcher, new at developing and asking research questions, new at case study design and methodology, and new to an urban setting, I wondered how to effectively convey a story that, for many reasons, needs to be told.

The story of Sullivan High School is important, not only because it is the story of education in America today with all of the attendant themes, concerns, hopes and disappointments, but also because it is a story of change in process that is beginning to work, but one which also faces an uncertain future. At the forefront of the nation's restructuring movement through its participation in both the Paideia Program and the Coalition for Essential Schools, the Sullivan faculty and administration have been nationally and internationally recognized, hosting hundreds of visitors annually.

My interest in becoming involved in such a project was directly related to my 23 years in the principalship, 21 as the principal of a college preparatory, suburban, high school. As we integrated with our inner city in the late 1970's, it became apparent that with an increasingly diverse student body, many significant questions about education were being raised without accompanying answers. Hearing that Sullivan had been successful in a multi-cultural environment interested me—especially as it pertained to how leadership may have affected the changes at Sullivan. As a career administrator I know that the current operation of public schools needs revision if we are to have any hope of success in the future.

My first contact with the principal was by telephone on September 4, 1991. My initial site visit was made on September 10, at which time I briefed the principal on the National Center for School Leadership study. He in turn told me about Sullivan High School, enthusiastically discussing the Paideia Program and how it empowered students and made them self-learners. He also provided me with literature on the Paideia Program, which was at Sullivan instituted in 1984, and with information on the Illinois Alliance for Essential Schools, an affiliate of the National Coalition for Essential Schools. Arrangements for meeting the faculty were made and documents pertaining to the operation and culture of the school were shared.

Plans for meeting the faculty and for beginning data collection were arrested when, on September 25, the principal indicated that this was not a good time to visit Sullivan. He told me that teachers were concerned about the possibility of a strike. He indicated that the faculty had voted down a request by the Coalition of Essential Schools to conduct research at Sullivan, adding that they had a North Central evaluation team visit scheduled for March and expected 35 people from the Coalition on site in early November. Morale was also suffering because the school had lost 2.4 staff positions as a result of Board mandated cuts that fall.

The principal indicated that it would be appropriate for me to continue visiting Sullivan, but suggested I pursue a limited number of activities. He then invited me to attend a meeting scheduled for 3:00 that afternoon. By attending this meeting and other regularly scheduled, bimonthly meetings of the faculty committee directing restructuring efforts at Sullivan, I was able to maintain close contact with the faculty and to observe the school as it struggled with change.

When the tentative strike date, November 18, passed without action, tensions among staff members seemed to abate. I conducted the first of thirty-one faculty interviews on November 27 and was formally introduced to the faculty the following January.

The Story

The story of Sullivan revealed the details of the implementation of a school-wide program. The incorporation of the Paideia Program into Sullivan in 1984 and how

the staff was prepared for the program could be used as a model for those embarking on new ventures. Sullivan was also the story of an ongoing change effort that encountered a myriad of problems. Leadership at Sullivan found new life and discovered many inherent in the shared decision-making process as authority challenges is distributed amongst the school administration, the steering committee, the local school council, and the school board.

Sullivan may give us a glimpse of the schools of tomorrow. Demographers have predicted that the population of our country will be less than fifty percent White in forty years. The people of the United States will become continually more diverse as immigration rates continue to increase. Sullivan is already there. More than 30 different languages are now spoken in the homes of the roughly 1,150 students. Fifty-five percent of the Sullivan students are of African-American descent, 26 percent are Hispanic/Latino, 10 percent are Asian and 9 percent are White.

The majority of students come from the middle and lower socioeconomic classes. More than one-third of the students come from families who exist below the poverty line (1991 School Report Card). The number of students who are from single parent families is not known but an administrator believed it was over half the student body.

This represents a significant change for the high school over a relatively short period of time. The student population was almost entirely White twenty-five years ago. The ethnic majority at that time was Jewish. Most students would have been considered middle class and very few families existed below the poverty line. The vast majority of students came from two-parent homes; nearly all went to college.

Sullivan is part of the Chicago School System, called the worst in America only a few years ago by then Secretary of Education William Bennett. As a big-city school, it is heir to widely chronicled problems of educational politics: Inadequate funding, decaying neighborhoods, decrepit school buildings, single parent homes, poverty, gangs, and drugs. It would be a mistake, however, to assume that these problems reside solely in the urban province.

Sullivan is the story of leadership that makes a difference, leadership that is found in the principal, among the school's administrators and throughout the faculty. It is also the story of a group of hard working, caring people with odds stacked high against them. In this story, a group of people are helping to kindle the spark of learning in many students who, if this spark does not ignite, face the grim prospects of a future without the ability to choose a lifestyle of personal fulfillment.

Mainly, however, Sullivan is the story of a faculty in which an attitude about learning and learners was carefully and skillfully developed through the Paideia Program and how that attitude was made manifest through the implementation of an instructional program based upon Paideia principles.

The Setting

With approximately 1150 students, Sullivan is one of the smallest of the more than sixty high schools in the Chicago Public School System, the third largest public school system in the nation. Sullivan is a magnet school for the Paideia Program and for music, meaning that students living anywhere in Chicago may attend Sullivan for these special programs.

The system, in this context, means the Board of Education and the central office. By law, nature, and design this agency distributes resources, including staffing, money, and materials. It is viewed as a control agency by staff at Sullivan (Appendix E). Expressions of anger, suspicion, concern, and disdain for the motives and competence of people serving on the Board and in the central office were common during formal interviews even though all of the formal interviews were conducted after November 18, the tentative date of the strike that did not come off. (Note: The central office was often referred to as the "Board of Ed" by teachers. It was as if the system's central bureaucracy and the School Board were viewed as inseparable.)

In nearly all of the interviews in which the Board and/or Central Offices was discussed, teachers perceived the Board and central office to be more concerned about politics and money than children, too remote to know what is going on in the schools, and indifferent to the plights of the individual buildings.

In 1989, in an effort to improve student performance, enhance school management, and improve the delivery of services, the Chicago Board of Education implemented systemwide school reform. The basic premise of the reform was that by decentralizing operations and involving parents and the local community, a more effective system would evolve (Baugher, Marchiafava, and Mueller, 1991, p. 1). Thus, the Local School Council was born.

Each individual school in the Chicago system has a Council, which is composed of the principal, two teachers, six parents, two members at large from the school's attendance area, and one student representative (at the high school level). The Council hires the principal, controls some funds, and has input into some decisions concerning the operation of the school. Council members provided input into the School Improvement Plans, which were mandated by state law. The Local School Council also serves as a support agency to the school.

The Neighborhood and the Physical Setting

The Sullivan neighborhood is primarily residential with a mixture of small and large apartment buildings and single family residences. The names of just a few of the retail shops that line Clark Street, lying two blocks west of the school, present a graphic picture of the neighborhood—and perhaps the United States—in 1992: Kung Fu Karate, Vietnam-American Restaurant, El Castillo de Chapultepec, Nha Thang Restaurant, Universal Videos, Play Lotto, Cajun Joes, H & R Block, McDonald's and Taco Bell.

The high school building covers one city block. The main entrance opens west on Bosworth Avenue, which is lined with shade trees that meet over the narrow street. The small green space that runs the length of the school is landscaped with shrubs, bushes, plots of flowers, and neat patches of lawn as designed by the school horticulture class. The school has received awards for landscaping, its beautification program, cleanliness, and remaining graffiti-free.

The building can accommodate 1,400 students, according to the 1990 Alliance Annual Report, but if enrollment were to increase, space would become a serious problem. Scheduling of rooms is tight at the present time; some teachers move

several times each day to meet with their classes. Several of the departmental offices are small and crowded.

Even though Sullivan has been cited for cleanliness and an absence of graffiti, the interior of the school is rundown; it needs to be painted. Plaster is in poor repair in much of the building. Rain water leaks through the school roof causing a myriad of problems.

Demographic Challenges

The Self-study report, prepared by the Sullivan High School staff for the North Central Association audit held March 25, 26, & 27, states:

As economic divisions in the neighborhood have increased, Sullivan, like the Chicago Public School System as a whole, has been perceived increasingly as a school for the disadvantaged. Sullivan has to respond to the need of students from poorer homes and to the perception in the community.

A concern for how the school is perceived by neighbors in the immediate vicinity of the school was expressed in staff interviews.

Most of the people in the neighborhood do not send their children to Sullivan. A lot of them send them to St. Ignatius and particularly the girls to St. Scholastica.

And particularly this year, there has been a lot of gang activity outside the school. And all the neighbors have to do is see it and they assume that what is happening is also happening inside.

The dropout rate at Sullivan is approximately fourteen percent, which means that roughly half the entering freshmen do not graduate. The significant drop in enrollment between grades 9 and 12 is addressed the North Central Self-Study:

We have a much larger freshman class than senior class each year. This is due primarily to the fact that students must be in school until age 16, by law.

School attendance rates run between eighty and ninety percent. This compares favorably with other Chicago high schools, but is well below the average for the State of Illinois, which was 93.5% in 1990-91. Just over thirty percent of the Sullivan student body either entered or left the school during the 1990-91 school year, which is roughly ten percent above the state mobility rate (1990-91 School Report Card).

Sullivan has a significant problem with tardiness, so much so that this past winter teachers volunteered to perform hall sweeps during their preparation periods in order to rid the corridors of students at the beginning of class periods. Considerable frustration was expressed with respect to this issue both at Alliance Steering Committee meetings and during staff interviews.

Several faculty members indicated their frustration with the lack of support the school received from parents. The problem of a lack of parental involvement in and support for education was aptly summarized in the following words:

I want to see parents involved in the school in changing their children . . . we're getting the support of an extremely small group of people who are working through our Local School Council and they, I believe, from what I have heard from the reports, are having a very difficult time getting parents to become more involved.

Sullivan students are not exempt from the problems of urban teenagers such as gang involvement, drug use, and teenage pregnancy, although faculty members have indicated that they believe Sullivan students are involved in gangs to a lesser degree than students in most other Chicago public high schools. Some staff indicated that gang activity is not prevalent within the building itself. One of these staff members said:

Every school has gang problems. There is no doubt about that. But I think our gang situation—our gang kids know we know who they are because we are a relatively small city school. I tell kids if they're in a gang that's up to them, just don't bring it in the building . . . Most of our gang problems are outside the building.

Faculty and Staff

The administrative staff of six serves a teaching staff of seventy-five and includes the Principal, Assistant Principal, Programmer, Disciplinarian, Paideia Prep Program Coordinator, and Paideia Program Coordinator/Activities Director. Sullivan has four full time guidance counselors.

In addition to kitchen and maintenance staff, four people are employed in maintaining building security under the direction of the disciplinarian, along with two Chicago police officers. The police are not under the direction of the principal, but are present at Sullivan daily.

Most staff members are veterans of the Chicago Public School System. Nearly all were hired by the current principal. In 1984, when the Paideia Program was instituted at Sullivan, all staff members were interviewed by the principal to ascertain if they would remain at Sullivan.

The Program

Course offerings include classes in art, business education, computer science, English, foreign language, mathematics, music, physical education, science, and social studies. Advanced Placement courses are offered in the English, history, science, and foreign language departments. The *manner* in which the program is delivered makes Sullivan unique. The Paideia Program, described in detail in the next chapter, is the instructional heart of the school. The Paideia Program functions on three levels at Sullivan High School. Roughly 300 students take part in the Impact Program, the Paideia Proposal as designed by Mortimer Adler. In addition to receiving their instruction in accord with Adler's pedagogical methods, Impact students must take four years of five major academic areas. That is, they study four years of math, science, English, history and a foreign language.

The remaining 9th through 12th grade students must meet state, system, and school graduation requirements, but are not required to take the four years of the five major areas required of the Impact students. The non-Impact student obtains the Paideia experience through the required seminars in English, history, and science classes and in four all-school seminars.

The third level is the recently instituted Paideia Prep Program, which prepares 111 seventh and eighth graders for the high school Paideia Program. Since the Paideia Program is a Chicago Public Schools magnet program, students living in any part of the city may enroll.

Sullivan offers programs in special education, a bilingual program, English as a Second Language (TESL), computer labs for writing, math and science, and a variety of tutoring programs. A full complement of extra-curricular activities is available for Sullivan students.

The Paideia Program

Paideia is a Greek word referring to the total education of the child. Based on University of Chicago Philosopher Mortimer Adler's book, *The Paideia Proposal*, the Paideia Program emphasizes a general and common education for all based on the liberal arts (Moses, 1989). The goal of the curriculum and pedagogy espoused in the Paideia Program is:

- to prepare the student to earn a living
- to prepare the student for the duties of citizenship in a democracy
- to prepare the student for self-development and continued learning throughout life.

Three forms of pedagogy are used in the program: The Socratic Seminar, didactic instruction, and coaching. If the Paideia Program is the heart of Sullivan's instructional program, then the Socratic Seminar is at the heart of Sullivan's teaching methodology.

The intent of this methodology is to develop critical thinking skills by reading original source material to be later discussed in seminar format. Seminars are conducted weekly in all English and history classes and once a month in science classes. Enrichment seminars are provided on a monthly basis. In addition, students attend all-school seminars four times each year. All faculty members, counselors and administrators included, lead these ninety minute sessions. Students are assigned randomly across grade and level of involvement in the Paideia Program. Special education students participate with all other students.

Sullivan's identity as a school may not be totally inseparable from the Paideia Program, but it is very near to it. Without the Paideia Program, the story of Sullivan would be vastly different.

A clear notion of the importance of the Paideia concepts to the school's mission can be found in the opening words of the school's philosophy.

We, the teachers and administrators of Sullivan High School, in setting forth the following as our school's philosophy, acknowledge that the foundation of our beliefs rests firmly on the ideals of the Paideia Principles which are incorporated herein . . .

In talking about the relationship of the school mission to the Paideia Program, teachers note:

[Paideia] touches all of the kids in one way or another and it touches all the teachers in one way or another. No matter what you teach, you are involved in it.

Origins

How did Paideia come to be at Sullivan and why has it gained such a hold on the school? The person responsible for installing the program at Sullivan was Dr. Ruth Love, a member of Dr. Adler's Paideia Board. Dr. Love, then Chicago General Superintendent of Schools, believed the program could bring a badly needed change to education in Chicago.

The Sullivan principal was the guiding force in implementing the program. A stronger exponent for Paideia would be hard to find. The following comments from the principal provide an insight into his educational philosophy as well as into the Paideia Program itself.

So I know that it works. I know that many students who fail in ordinary circumstances would have to guess what the teacher's mind is—they have to guess what the teacher wants him or her to think. It becomes a game of figuring out the teacher, not learning the material. That's how we teach our kids.

I think all of the training makes the teacher a lot more—they feel a lot more like teachers. For example, if they've read all of these books their conversation is very different from one who's has simply passed out work-sheets and done the same thing every year. They walk into a classroom and they have lesson plans that are 25 years old. They simply did not change. But a teacher who has to go into a classroom and has to learn each time he or she has a class is a very powerful person. That is what a teacher is—not a person who passes out work-sheets for fill-ins and true-false.

To implement Paideia, the principal was able to hire teachers who wanted to work in the program. He was not only given the power to bring in new teachers when the program was adopted at Sullivan in 1984, but also to re-interview all of the staff at Sullivan to see if they wished to remain under the Paideia Program. Funds were provided to train the staff in Paideia methodology and inculcate them in Paideia philosophy at summer seminars at St. John's College in Santa Fe, New Mexico, through seminars conducted in the Chicago area and at the University of Illinois and at weekend staff retreats at Lake Geneva, Illinois. Additionally, the principal modeled Paideia methodologies weekly during demonstration lessons taught in Sullivan classrooms.

The Program calls for rather specific methodologies that can be quantified and taught. Teachers were able to learn the program quickly. Paideia presented features that appealed to many of the teachers, who, in turn, became advocates for Paideia. As a program built on the liberal arts and taught through the Great Books, it can be quite attractive to those who aspire to the intellectual.

Learning to Learn

The Socratic seminar has also provided the Sullivan community with an intellectual focus. Quarterly all-school seminars, monthly enrichment seminars, and occasional special topic seminars have fostered a school-wide exploration of ideas. [Sullivan is] an educational community where freshmen and seniors, remedial and honors students, junior high and senior high school students, minority and non-minority students regularly engage in meaningful conversation (1991 Alliance Report).

The impact of the Paideia Program on students and staff has helped both groups learn how to learn. There is strong evidence to indicate that the Paideia Program has also had a pronounced and lasting effect on the staff. The training and retraining of staff in the Paideia Program has been an outstanding and unique vehicle for the in-service training of teachers. Several teachers indicated that Paideia made them a learner once again and has improved the intellectual climate of the school. Teachers spoke of becoming learners once again; lounge talk became discussions of Aristotle and the value of zero. This general sentiment emerged in several interviews. The faculty appear to take a genuine pride in their growth through the Paideia Program and their self-perception as an intellectually-oriented staff.

The effect on student learning more difficult to ascertain. Test scores are not necessarily an accurate measure of the results expected in the Paideia Program. Comments from faculty seem to indicate a belief in the importance of the Program for Sullivan students, however, and communicate a belief that student growth and accomplishment are ongoing. Teachers now see students as active learners who have taken on the responsibilities of critical thinkers. One teacher observed that students are

expected to be thinkers now. . . . I notice the ability of students to challenge a fact, a question, or a position of a teacher as valid.

All of the administrators interviewed and nearly all of the teachers indicated strong support for the Paideia Program and how it has helped students become more critical in their thinking.

The Socratic Seminar also created an interaction that brought faculty members and students into a common situation. Indeed, in their interviews several staff members indicated that faculty-student relationships are generally positive at Sullivan.

Sullivan's climate is certainly enriched and enhanced by other factors—the small size of the school, which has permitted a sense of community to evolve; the ethnic and cultural diversity of the student body and the faculty; the atmosphere of intellectual richness; and the great amount of attention and positive reinforcement

the school has received from outsiders. However, it would seem that the empowerment of students and staff to become a meaningful part of their institution has been the cornerstone for creating a positive psychological environment.

Another effect that the Paideia Program has had on Sullivan is the recognition and attention the school has received because of its involvement in the Paideia and Essential Schools programs. Hundreds of educators and other interested parties, including people from abroad, have visited Sullivan. The recognition and attention focused on Sullivan serves as a source of pride for many of the staff.

Instructional Leadership & Paideia: A Model

The Paideia Program, has been successful at Sullivan because it is a sound educational program that is definable and therefore can be readily absorbed by teachers given appropriate training and practice; because the resources required to implement the program, to train the teachers, and to provide refreshment for teachers through in-service training were amply provided, and because the principal provided strong instructional leadership.

I spent as little time with the principal as I reasonably could, maximizing time with other staff members, and, in analyzing the fieldnotes and interviews, repeatedly questioned the principal's role and importance to the school in light of any potential biases on my part as a former principal. The prominence of the person, however, and the importance of the role he played in the successful implementation of the Paideia Program emerged despite these cautions. Nearly all of those interviewed, whether teacher or administrator, acknowledged the strength and importance of the principal's instructional leadership.

The principal's leadership in the Paideia program appears to primarily ideological. His vibrant personality and his reputation as an outstanding administrator certainly enhance his leadership, but his strong belief in the Paideia Program is the key. His selection by former Superintendent Ruth Love to implement the Paideia Program at Sullivan may have been due to his leadership ability and his reputation, but the leadership he provided in successfully implementing the Paideia Program rested on his single-minded, unyielding belief in the efficacy of the principles of the Paideia

Program. He seems to possess a nearly unshakable belief in the Paideia philosophy.

This is learning for life, which means it never stops. We're trying to teach people to fish, not give them fish, which means that no matter how many times we do it, it goes on forever. Once you enter into this kind of program, you never get out of it. It's like the Mafia. You're always in it. You must stay. You can't ever leave because we expect you to go on and on and share with other people what you're doing.

He closely identifies himself with the mission of the school and the Paideia Program. Most of the lengthy interview with the principal dealt with the Paideia Program. Repeated questions on leadership resulted in the principal discussing some aspect of the Paideia Program.

Informal and informal interviews, faculty members identified the principal with the Paideia Program and the intellectual focus it brings to the school.

That's one thing I've always liked about him. As much as over the years we've had arguments and disagreements on certain issues, he reads, he writes, and he cares passionately about the educational program.

The principal's instructional leadership is also manifested in his commitment to providing training for his staff. He believes that, by its very nature, the Paideia Program provides an in-service methodology that continually updates teachers. They must constantly read and refresh themselves.

The principal is a person who will find a way—against whatever odds—to act upon his beliefs. At the March 4, 1992, Alliance Steering Committee meeting, staff were discussing the ramifications of having Board-imposed 50-minute class periods. Some opined that Paideia and Alliance programs would be seriously jeopardized under such an arrangement. In response to these opinions, the principal said, "As a pure administrator, I'm going to have a program that's Paideia and Alliance." He went on to say that they may have to cut down on some aspects of the programs but that they would have them.

The principal spends several hours in the classroom each week, leading seminars. He reads constantly to prepare for these seminars. He is almost evangelistic in communicating his belief in the Paideia methodology to his staff, to visitors, and seemingly to anyone who will listen.

The time he spends outside of school supports his work at Sullivan. He directs the Paideia Institute of Hyde Park, an organization that trains people in the Paideia Program and he is a colleague of Mortimer Adler. During the 1991-92 school year he led seven Paideia seminar retreats for teachers, parents and others, and he regularly travels to St. John's College in Santa Fe, New Mexico to work in their Paideia training program.

With much of his time devoted to the Paideia Program, the principal has delegated most of the responsibilities for the day-to-day operation of the school—attendance, discipline, programming, etc.—to other administrators. He appears to give them a free hand and supports them in their decisions.

There is a downside to the principal's deep, intense involvement in the role of instructional leader. A teacher acknowledged the principal's strength as an instructional leader but also stated a concern regarding the costs of this type of principal leadership.

[He] is very much a leader in terms of philosophical roles, the Paideia, etc. I would like to see him more of a leader in terms of discipline. If I could change something about him it would be to make him understand that all of the wonderful programs in the world aren't going to mean anything if we don't have a well run building.

The principal is seen not only as the instructional leader but also as the chief change agent in the school. He encourages innovation and is perceived as supporting ideas for change if the ideas are at all feasible.

At times, he appeared to be impatient for change. At the March 12 faculty meeting he played a videotape demonstration on how technology could be used by a student to prepare a classroom presentation. When the video ended, the principal told the staff that this is what they would be doing, which precipitated

several questions and comments from staff members who appeared to be in the dark.

The principal's leadership extends to his hiring practices. He is widely lauded for having assembled a top quality staff at Sullivan and continues to place great importance on hiring.

[He] does most of his own staff selection. If there is a vacancy he doesn't wait to see who is going to be sent to us. He will go through resumes, interview, and try to find somebody who will fit into the program. It is very difficult. A teacher must do a lot of extra work and put in a lot of extra time.

The Teachers

When asked what they liked about Sullivan High School, teachers most commonly answer, the faculty. One teacher said:

I think it is an incredibly talented group of people—energetic, dedicated . . . Another thing I would say that is very astounding about the people at Sullivan: There are so many people here who are so bright, so intelligent, well educated, and just really competent people.

The teachers interviewed indicated support for the Paideia Program and about one third of those interviewed exhibit leadership qualities by actively promoting the program in their own ways. The principal commented on this when asked about staff leadership.

They have it on each other. When somebody slacks off, they criticize a lot . . . Teachers will tell you if you interview them. They complain more about each other than I complain about them. If somebody's not doing the job, they let me know right away. I think after a while you build a certain pride in what you are doing.

A teacher said of her colleagues:

I hate the word dedicated but I think that the majority of people are really interested in teaching. I've taught in schools where that's not the case. One of

my departmental colleagues described Sullivan as a "treadmill school." If you stop moving ahead, you move backwards.

Teachers repeatedly cited the Paideia Program as the impetus for formulating their new perspectives on teaching. They believe that they have gained new foci through Paideia implementation: They are once again learners; they believe that all students can learn, and that students can be responsible for their education.

The Administrators

The daily operations at Sullivan are managed and directed by an assistant principal, a disciplinarian and his staff, a programmer, and two Paideia Program coordinators. In several interviews, faculty members have cited these individuals for their leadership abilities. The principal appears to give administrators a wide latitude in which to do their jobs and to make the important decisions within their assigned areas.

Personal interviews with the administrators indicated that they not only support but also believe in the Paideia and Alliance programs. They are loyal to the principal and appear to possess a credibility with most staff members because of personal qualities of forthrightness, diligence, and ability as indicated in faculty interviews. One teacher expressed a feeling toward one administrator that reflected the feeling held by many teachers toward Sullivan administrators.

She is understanding of what we do and extremely supportive of what we do and does anything on her end. She is a realist. She sees the reality. She has to play by the rules but she sees the realities of the problem.

Expanding Paideia - The Alliance

Sullivan's participation in the Illinois Alliance for Essential Schools is at the heart of current change efforts. The story of the Alliance is not that of Paideia—the nearly flawless implementation of an educational program that came pretty much intact—but rather, it is a story still in the making. It is the story of a change effort that got off to a running start but eventually stalled as it, encountered a host of obstacles.

Sullivan's decision to become involved in the Illinois Alliance for Essential Schools appeared to come as a direct result of Sullivan's success in implementing Paideia and the desire to improve upon that existing program. A teacher who is a member of the Alliance Steering Committee talked about how Alliance was built on the existing Paideia Program.

We had already incorporated the Paideia ideas and the Alliance, to us, offered an opportunity to broaden what we had started. I like to think that it is very important for us not to forget that our restructuring and our reform is built on our belief in the Socratic Seminar and in skill building and it seems to me they are very compatible.

An after-the-fact analysis of Alliance and Paideia principles confirmed this earlier insight and original intent to build one program upon the other.

The steering committee read and discussed TheodoreSizer's *Horace's Compromise* and other literature generated by the Coalition of Essential Schools. It related this literature to the unique characteristics of Sullivan. In particular, it explored the connection between our Paideia Program and the essential school principles. This exploration convinced the steering committee that Sullivan's essential school would evolve from our present implementation of the educational philosophy articulated in Mortimer Adler's *The Paideia Proposal* (1990 Alliance Report).

After investigating possible membership in the Alliance, the faculty voted to become an Essential School in 1989. In a letter to State Alliance Coordinator Thomas McGreal, the Sullivan Alliance Coordinator indicated that Sullivan's experiences with Paideia made them a school ripe for further restructuring experiences (1989-90 Alliance Report).

Alliance Principles and Program

The Essential School program is one of the foremost restructuring programs in the country. Directed by Theodore Sizer, the program operates according to principles that have much in common with Paideia.

1. Schools should help students learn to use their minds well.

2. Schools should focus on student mastery of a limited number of essential skills and areas of knowledge.
3. The school's goals should apply to all students.
4. Teaching and learning should be personalized.
5. The student is a worker who has the primary responsibility for his/her education.
6. The diploma should be awarded upon a final demonstration of "Exhibition of Mastery" for graduation.
7. The tone of the school should stress values of non-anxious expectations, trust (until abused) and decency.
8. The principal and staff should have a sense of commitment to the entire school; dedicating themselves primarily to general education, and only secondarily to any particular discipline.
9. Administrative and budget goals should include a lower student load per teacher, substantial time for collective planning by teachers, competitive salaries for teachers and an ultimate per pupil cost not to exceed that at traditional schools by ten percent.

Not only do many of the Essential Schools' principles closely parallel those of the Paideia Program, but it appears that none of the principles contradict Paideia doctrine.

Alliance activities are directed by the Alliance Steering Committee, a body comprised of representatives from each academic department, the two Paideia Program Coordinators, the programmer and the principal. Other faculty and staff members may attend the meetings. The Assistant Principal chairs the committee, assisted by a faculty member, who is called the teacher liaison. Committee meetings are held every other Wednesday and are scheduled to last ninety minutes, although meetings sometimes go beyond the appointed ending time of 4:30 p.m.

The Steering Committee's primary mission is to consider ways and means of improving Sullivan High School through changes that are principally initiated by teachers and that are consonant with the philosophy of the Alliance for Essential Schools. Although the Alliance operates under a specific set of philosophic guidelines, one of its tenets is that change is a process and is therefore never ending.

The Alliance for Essential Schools is teacher centered, operating on the belief that the real changes needed in education must come from and through the classroom teacher. Teacher input into the change process is strongly encouraged through Steering Committee activities. In short, the Steering Committee is a vehicle for change—but primarily for teacher-driven change.

The Alliance Steering Committee appears to be the chief decision-making body in the school almost *de facto*, because it is the only broadly representative group within the school's organizational structure that meets on a regular basis. The Steering Committee provided a format for school restructuring and imbued Sullivan staff with increased freedom and responsibility to implement change. The principal stated that the committee "actually sets the philosophy for the school."

In its third year of a guaranteed five-year membership in the Illinois Alliance of Essential Schools, Sullivan received roughly \$25,000 in Alliance funds. The monies are used to compensate people for their time at meetings (Steering Committee members receive \$8 per hour for their meeting time), for staff development, and for staff attendance at Alliance meetings, which includes the cost of paying substitute teachers.

A Brief History of the Alliance

The first year of involvement in the Alliance went well. The Steering Committee was formed and decided to focus its initial efforts to restructure Sullivan around the Essential Schools principles of student as worker, less is more, and exhibition of mastery. The Committee revised the school philosophy to reflect these principles and wrote a three-year school improvement plan.

During that first year, teachers attended Essential Schools institutes, held faculty in-service programs on restructuring, met in interdisciplinary groups, discussed Essentials Schools principles, visited other schools, hosted visitors, ran interdisciplinary pilot programs, instituted the Diploma by Exhibition, and wrote successful grants for planning and restructuring.

The Committee served as a forum for any and all school concerns but soon had to define and therefore limit the types of issues it could legitimately consider. Many

of the concerns and complaints received were beyond the Committee's purview, both in terms of the Alliance mission and what a body of people could humanly handle in the time allotted (1990 Alliance Report).

Activities in the second year of Alliance membership included another year of in-service meetings, faculty and departmental planning meetings, curriculum development meetings, a school-wide campaign to advertise Essential School principles to students and faculty at Sullivan, visits to other schools by staff members, visits to Sullivan by Coalition personnel, subcommittee meetings, visits from other schools, faculty in-service meetings, and faculty in-service seminars and retreats.

Using the concept of student as worker, Sullivan increased opportunities for cooperative learning by expanding the number of Socratic seminars available for students, getting students involved in long-range group projects, and establishing study and peer editing groups within classes. Student coaching, test preparation activities, and tutoring programs were also instituted.

The Alliance's emphasis on Diploma by Exhibition provided the anchor for the educational program because it required a demonstration of mastery by the student. Because of the success of the Diploma by Exhibition, departments began to pilot their own exhibitions. With a successful second year of Alliance experiences behind them, the Principal and Steering Committee Chair looked forward to Sullivan's third year as an Essential School with optimism and enthusiasm.

This optimism and enthusiasm were blunted, however, as the threat of a teacher strike faced Chicago schools. In addition to pondering the possibility of a strike, the Sullivan staff was also preparing to host Coalition visitors in early November and the North Central Association team visit in March. The 1991-92 academic year was a busy one.

One of the Steering Committee members, a person identified as a leader on the faculty, discussed some of his concerns at the November 20 meeting. He said that he enjoyed that particular meeting because they talked about some new issues. He said they had been in the rut of talking about the same things since the previous

spring. He stated that two people, the Alliance chair and the teacher liaison, had kept the "thing together through their Herculean efforts." He ended his comments by saying that if they don't have more meetings like this they can "forget the Alliance."

Concerns and Confusion

Faculty interviews indicate that, for whatever reasons, the Alliance mission does not appear to be either well understood or as broadly accepted by the faculty as are Paideia principles. Whereas the great majority of staff interviewed spoke positively of the Paideia Program, relatively few provided such support for Alliance driven change efforts. Many faculty members were critical of the Essential Schools program at Sullivan and Steering Committee members were unclear of their mission and responsibility. Teachers saw Alliance efforts at change as being limited by the powers of the Board of Education.

Steering Committee Meetings—More Complaints, Confusion and Concern

Expressions of irritation, anger and concern about the directions Alliance efforts at change were heading—or whether they were heading anywhere—emerged in the frank, open discussions that typified Steering Committee meetings throughout the year. At the November 6 meeting the Steering Committee Chair expressed her frustrations:

Maybe some feel we've plateaued . . . maybe once we get over the hump things'll improve . . . paperwork, the strike, thirty-five visitors . . . once we get over that things will get better.

The amount of work, the number of tasks facing the Committee, and the possibility of a strike were not the only concerns facing the Steering Committee and Sullivan staff. Alliance principles were not being implemented as hoped.

In addition to the difficulties encountered in effecting Alliance programs and the confusion that appears to exist regarding the Alliance mission itself, teacher frustration over their workloads and a lack planning time seemed to have had a hand in stalling Alliance efforts at change. The following comment made by a Steering Committee member provides an insight into the emotion generated at some Steering Committee meetings.

We haven't gotten people working together . . . and we've got people burning out.

[Voice raised] We're hearing people saying they're getting out of here. And we can't have that!

Complaints of this general type pervaded Steering Committee meetings throughout the year.

My sense is that people are overwhelmed and cannot handle new things . . . we need to fix what we have.

There was also frustration with the lack of tangible results. At several Steering Committee meetings the Principal voiced his impatience with the slow pace of change efforts. At the December 4, 1991 meeting he said that they should be done with their planning by the end of the year. At a January meeting he again expressed his frustration over the lack of progress by the Committee.

It appears that only a few Sullivan faculty members actively support and promote Alliance change efforts. Alliance leadership is seen as residing primarily in two people, the Chair and the Alliance Teacher Liaison. Few initiatives appear to have come from other committee members.

The Chair expressed her concern over a lack of participation by teachers in the Alliance change effort throughout the year. At some meetings she seemed to plead with people to communicate the essence of Steering Committee discussions with their departmental colleagues, which is one of the major responsibilities of the department representative. She expressed disappointment when Committee members failed to complete assignments for a meeting. At the March 4 Steering Committee meeting she reminded Committee members that the Alliance was teacher based and that she felt that the teachers were not performing in leadership roles.

One other problem appeared to impede Alliance progress. Because it is the only broadly representative faculty committee in the school that meets on a regular basis, all types of issues were brought to the Steering Committee. Although this

has been recognized and discussed as a problem by Committee members, a great deal of the Committee's meeting time, energy, and emotion was still consumed on issues that might have been more appropriately and effectively addressed elsewhere within the decision-making structure of the institution.

Alliance: A Struggle

Whereas the Paideia Program could be used as a model for the successful implementation of a program, the Alliance for Essential Schools Program is struggling at Sullivan. The Alliance experience raises questions that must be answered if the restructuring of schools is to become a reality—and not all of the questions relate explicitly to leadership.

Alliance leadership, however, continues its work. The principal, a proven leader, is strongly supportive of the program; the teacher liaison, who assists the chair of the Steering Committee, was praised for her leadership by several staff members during the interviews; and the Chair of the Alliance Steering Committee, the Assistant Principal, is highly regarded by her colleagues.

What happened to thwart Alliance efforts at change and produce the present state of limbo? It was clear from the staff interviews that a considerable number of Sullivan staff members are not sold on Alliance. In a good many cases, the teachers do not appear to know how the Alliance operates or what the program is trying to achieve. Despite continual prompting by the Alliance Chair on the importance of communication between the departmental representatives on the Steering Committee and their departmental colleagues, it appears that communication on Alliance matters has been either lacking or ignored by many teachers. One Steering Committee member expressed concern that the school administration does not inform faculty of critical information. Steering Committee members were surprised one day to be visited by observers from a suburban high school. Additionally, another committee member echoed the popular sentiment that they cannot be certain of Local School Council support.

The same commitment may not exist with respect to Alliance as it does for Paideia. Two administrators coordinate the Paideia Program and the principal devotes much of his time to Paideia. The Alliance Chair works only part-time on Alliance

matters, devoting the rest of her time to her duties as the Assistant Principal. Faculty training for Alliance was not nearly so extensive as for Paideia. There are other factors that have blocked Alliance progress.

The time constraints that teachers are under may also interfere with change efforts. Most faculty members appear to be very busy with their teaching and either do not wish to become involved in the institutional decision-making process or simply do not feel they have time to become involved. Sullivan faculty also expressed a need for time to reflect on the change process and their responsibility to the Alliance goals.

Another factor is the attitude many teachers seem to hold toward their decision-making prerogatives. Most felt that they should have a major say in what they do in their classroom and in curriculum and most indicated that they were given that latitude at Sullivan. Eighty-six percent of the Sullivan staff felt they were allowed freedom in the selection of teaching materials, 76% said they were regularly involved in curriculum work and nearly 90% said they were allowed freedom in the selection of teaching methods (North Central Self Evaluation Report, 1992, p. 74).

Few teachers, however, expressed a desire to become involved in broader decision-making—decision-making that would affect the entire school. A few expressed the wish that some aspect of the institution be improved but did so by placing the burden of responsibility on someone else's shoulders. For example, one teacher said that the school administration and police could do more about improving discipline and control. She saw a problem that needed to be addressed and clearly stated who she thought should do this. Faculty members did not disclose the reasons for their hesitancy to become more involved in site-management at Sullivan.

Another factor that could inhibit the Alliance change efforts is the Alliance structure itself. Many teachers do not appear to be oriented to change, preferring a concrete rather than abstract structure within which to work (Fullan and Miles, pp. 745-46). By its very nature—quite open-ended—the Alliance is therefore self-defeating for some people. Paideia, by contrast came as an already assembled entity. The Alliance principles are at sufficient variance with the realities of the

Chicago Public School System in some areas such that when these principles cannot be realized cynicism results.

The ideals of the Essential School and the reality of Chicago are far apart, as can be seen in the following example. Coalition head Theodore Sizer calls for a teacher load of eighty pupils. The contractual load for most teachers in Chicago high schools is 140 students. For physical education teachers it is 200 students. Although not all teachers have the maximum number of students, few have the eighty suggested by Sizer.

Alliance principles also call for "substantial time for collective planning" for teachers. That has not been achieved at Sullivan and has been a topic of extensive and sometimes heated discussion at Steering Committee meetings throughout the year.

One other factor, training—or a lack thereof—appears to be an obstacle to promoting shared decision-making. Although the Sullivan staff appeared to receive excellent training in Paideia—training that continues through periodic opportunities for renewal—and training in some of the specific programs they adopted as a result of becoming an Essential School, teachers and administrators do not appear to have received sufficient training in the change process itself and in shared decision-making.

With the bottom-up configuration of the CES restructuring teachers are told to suggest any changes they feel are necessary. This "candy store" approach has proven to be both a boon to teachers and a dilemma. Teachers feel empowered by being asked for their ideas, but they, for the most part, are not practiced in designing schoolwide change and tend to shy away from that responsibility.

Comparing training for Paideia and training teachers for change using the Essential Schools model, which is by purpose more amorphously defined, is perhaps inappropriate. Paideia is a rather specifically defined program whereas the Alliance program is more open ended. As indicated earlier, many teachers are not oriented toward change and therefore are not easily induced to participate in the process, let alone initiate ideas for change. Teachers are not under the same constraints to

accept Alliance principles as they were to accept Paideia, which was a condition of their hiring.

Sullivan: The Lessons

As a laboratory for studying leadership and change, Sullivan proved to be all that it promised to be and more. Studying either the Paideia Program or the patterns of leadership at the school alone would have been worthwhile. To have been able to examine these two facets of the school while observing, from a front row seat, the trials and tribulations of change in the making through the deliberations of the Alliance Steering Committee was most rewarding, albeit frustrating, too, because I could not help but empathize with the teachers as they encountered obstacle after obstacle in their quest to make Sullivan the best it could be. The meetings provided a first hand view of change in the making -- or perhaps the unmaking because the jury is still out on the Alliance for Essential Schools program at Sullivan. What, then, are the lessons that can be learned from the Sullivan experience?

Through Paideia, the people at Sullivan—principal, teacher and student—learned how to learn. The Socratic seminars exhibited students who could question, probe, discuss with respect, and put together a logical argument. The faculty interviews revealed a group of people who have grown personally as well as professionally through an instructional methodology, one that requires much of them but which provides suitable rewards in terms of professional and personal satisfaction.

The people at Sullivan learned that an innovative program, properly planned and implemented, can be successfully installed in a school. This may seem obvious, but it is not. Skepticism abounds among practitioners, perhaps because they have found the failure of such programs to be far more common than their success. The Sullivan staff also learned that the Paideia Program, is a sound program and, given the circumstances of proper implementation, it works.

Whether Sullivan teachers believed that all students could learn under appropriate conditions prior to the inclusion of Paideia in their school is not known, but it appears that the staff now believe this is indeed true. Teachers seemed to show

this expectation in their interaction with students. The fact that many students at Sullivan drop out and/or do not appear to learn was considered a function of the circumstances of their lives—poverty, parenting, gang influence, etc.—rather than their innate capacity for learning.

From the Sullivan example we learn that behavior often precedes belief. Some teachers came to Sullivan for reasons other than being attracted to Paideia but once involved in the program, became believers. Even the principal admitted that he was dragged "kicking and screaming" into the program.

Sullivan is an excellent model of an in-service program for teachers. The constant updating of Paideia methodology through faculty seminars, seems to have served the people at Sullivan well. The principal indicated in his interview that he felt the constant updating on methodology and content required of Paideia teachers addresses the need for re-educating teachers.

Sullivan has also learned that change is a two-edged sword. After jumping into Alliance with both feet because of the successful Paideia experience, the Steering Committee now faces an uncertain future. The Committee Chair said that the staff will need to see tangible results during the 1992-93 school year if the Essential Schools program is to remain a vehicle for change at Sullivan.

The struggle is not just over resources, teacher time, and the ambiguity of change, which appears to be anathema to many teachers. It also relates to teachers accepting their role in restructuring and learning the skills needed to engage themselves in decision-making on an institutional level.

A factor inhibiting teacher involvement in restructuring—which carries the implicit expectation of teachers making decisions about the institution and its course—may be the attitude toward the process of decision making at the building level in the Chicago School System (i.e., the perception teachers hold for the role of formal leadership, which is to say toward the principal). There appears to be a deference to the Sullivan principal's leadership and power that either cannot permit or greatly inhibits shared decision-making in its purest form. One teacher noted that a colleague who could deal effectively with the principal knew to approach him in a collaborative spirit; posing a problem as one that "we share."

The word "share" implies an egalitarianism among people, yet the principal—as well as the staff—seems oriented toward a hierarchical decision-making structure.

He (the principal) makes them know, in whatever manner he has, that he is the leader and yet allows discussion, he promotes discussion and ideas from—I'll use the word below—his staff.

"He allows" is critical terminology because if staff perceive that the principal "allows," then shared decision-making is something permitted by the principal. If it is "permitted," are teachers really an essential part of the process? To the extent that this attitude may exist, it may exist more in the minds of teachers than in administrators. For one teacher, that is as it should be. When asked what he looked for in a leader, he said:

Decision making. He should be able to say, "This is the way it is going to be."
And stay with it.

Several faculty members recounted negative experiences with principals in other Chicago schools and, by contrast, spoke positively of the Sullivan principal's openness and his willingness to listen. Of significance may be the effect that a principal's attitude and manner can have on a staff. It almost appeared at times that teachers were relieved that they did not have an autocrat or a tyrant as their principal. This is far more a comment about the teachers than about the principal. Teachers appeared to be grateful for his more personable style of leadership, as it contrasted with those of many other principals.

To be able to truly engage in shared decision-making it would seem that the feeling of gratitude and deference must progress to one of self-acceptance as an equal partner in the decision-making structure—or at least to the point where one considers her input of equal worth to that of others, teachers or administrators.

Acculturation is difficult to overcome. One staff member saw the traditional top down model of decision-making in the Chicago Public School System as a major obstacle that must be overcome if teachers to become an integral part of the

decision-making process. She saw administrators as well as many teachers buying into this concept of decision-making.

I think one of the problems the teachers will run into is this idea of teachers having a part in decision-making—I mean, in **REAL** decision-making. I'm not talking about if they give them a chance to decide what book they want to use but any other decisions as far as what goes on in the entire school, or as far as restructuring or what some big problems might be.

The example of the principal reinforced and added to the notions of the importance of belief and the ability to communicate that belief. His strict allegiance to the Paideia Program and his willingness to do what had to be done to make it successful has left an permanent impression on me.

The staff showed what people can do when they understand their mission, are committed to that mission—e.g., Paideia—as well as what happens when teachers are unsure of the mission—e.g., Alliance. The Sullivan staff also provides a model for teacher in-service training as a group of people who began learning all over again through Paideia in mid and late career.

The struggles of the Alliance Steering Committee taught me the fragility of change, how quickly the best laid plans can go awry when conditions are not optimum. To facilitate change requires proper resources, a persistent effort, the acceptance of ambiguity, and the willingness to handle discouragement.

The overwhelming impression left by Sullivan, however, is that students whom society seems to have written off can learn. Released from the bonds of a more traditional teaching, they can not only participate intelligently but flourish and grow. The Sullivan staff and Paideia show that all students can be educated. The question we face is whether we are willing to do what must be done to achieve this.

Alliance, the Future, and the Faculty—Some Final Thoughts

At the final Steering Committee meeting of the year, the chair asked each member to share, with the group, her or his thoughts on the status of Alliance, given the

difficulties faced during the year. Although many expressed optimism about the future of Alliance change efforts at Sullivan, some were guarded in expressing their hopes for progress, indicating that they would have to work very hard to achieve success. Significantly, two Steering Committee members who appeared to be resisters throughout the 1991-92 school year indicated that they would maintain an open mind. The chair was direct in telling her colleagues the importance the coming school year holds for the future of Alliance. She said that the 1992-93 school year would be crucial, indicating that if they did not note clear progress, the program may be in jeopardy.

The willingness of the Steering Committee to permit an outsider to observe meetings that were more often marked by intense, heated discussion and frank rendering of opinions is indicative of the openness of the Sullivan staff. The discussions also showed the faculty's intellectual ability and deep concern for young people.

A major reason that Sullivan has enjoyed success is because of the competence, attitude, and diligence of the staff. Although exceptions exist in any large body of people, the teachers and administrators may be generally characterized as hard working, dedicated, intelligent, cooperative and caring. They are the people who have made Sullivan's programs work and they are the people who have carved out Sullivan's unique identity.

The most commendable quality of the Sullivan staff is its ability to persevere against odds stacked high against them—the bureaucracy of a huge school system; indifferent parents; poorly motivated students, many of whom are years below grade level and many of whom are entangled in the urban web of poverty, gangs, and drugs; large classes, a cramped building, too few resources and not enough money, and too little time. Yet they make the effort everyday, believing in their mission and in themselves. What they have been able to accomplish is remarkable.

How many staffs from other high schools—urban, suburban or small town—could accomplish what the Sullivan staff has? Probably few. How many would become discouraged and bail out at the earliest opportunity? I suspect the number would be high. The Sullivan staff is exceptional in spirit and in deed—yet they face the

prospect of change efforts that may be curtailed, placed on hold, or simply forgotten.

One then must ask, "What does it take?" The school enjoys proven leadership in both the administration and faculty, the staff is outstanding, and Sullivan is involved in two stellar educational programs, Paideia and Alliance. The principal was allowed to select the staff, Sullivan receives extra funding because of its involvement in special programs, and the school can recruit students from throughout Chicago for the Paideia Program. Further, Sullivan has received national and even international recognition for its accomplishments and efforts at change.


The answer to this question must lie, in part, outside of the schools, because the staff at Sullivan, although not perfect, is doing what can be done. There is not a whole lot more to give or do. The answers must be found with those who fund education, with the parents and others who prepare the student for formal schooling during the critical first five years of the child's life and with a society that must decide—if it is not too late—just how much the lives of individuals in America are worth.

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